

Amendments to the Claims:

Please replace all prior claims versions and listings with the following:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for forming a multicellular ceramic article, the method comprising:
 - a. forming a mixture of components comprising inorganic ceramic powder materials, a binder, an aqueous solvent for the binder, and organic constituents including an oil-based component having a flash point;
 - b. mixing and plasticizing the components to form a plasticized mixture;
 - c. shaping the plasticized mixture into a green ceramic article;
 - d. drying the green ceramic article;
 - e. removing a portion of the oil-based component from the ~~dried~~ green ceramic article by flowing a heated gas longitudinally through the green ceramic article; and,
 - f. firing the green ceramic article having a portion of the oil-based component removed, ~~to develop the product structure.~~
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the ceramic article is a cellular monolith.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein the cellular monolith is a honeycomb.
4. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein the heated gas is flowed at a rate of 0.2 to 8 standard cubic feet per minute (scfm).
5. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the heated gas is flowed at a rate of 4 to 8 scfm.
6. (original) The method of claim 5 wherein the heated gas is at a temperature which heats the green ceramic article below the flash point of the oil-based component.
7. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein the gas is at a temperature which can heat the green ceramic article to between 110°C to 165°C.

8. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein the heated gas is air.
9. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein the air is maintained at a temperature of between 120°-140°C.
10. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein the heated gas is nitrogen (N₂).
11. (currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the ~~air~~ N₂ is maintained at a temperature of between 155°-160°C.
12. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein the N₂ gas is recirculated.
13. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least 70% of the oil-based component is removed.
14. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein at least 85% of the oil-based component is removed.
15. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein at least 95% of the oil-based component is removed.
16. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the portion of oil-based component that is removed is reused in step a.
17. (currently amended) In the process of making honeycomb articles by forming and shaping into a green body, a plasticized powder mixture comprising powder material, a water soluble binder, [[a]] an aqueous solvent, and [[an]] a non-solvent oil-based component, the improvement which comprises removing the oil-based component ~~after drying and~~ prior to firing of the green body by flowing a gas at a temperature and rate sufficient to remove a portion of the non-solvent oil-based component.
- 18-27. (canceled)

28. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the aqueous solvent is water.
29. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the binder is a cellulose ether binder.
30. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the binder comprises methylcellulose or a methylcellulose derivative.
31. (new) A method for forming a multicellular ceramic article, the method comprising:
- a. forming a mixture of components comprising inorganic ceramic powder materials, a binder, an aqueous solvent for the binder, and an oil-based component having a flash point;
 - b. mixing and plasticizing the components to form a plasticized mixture;
 - c. shaping the plasticized mixture into a green ceramic article; then
 - d. removing at least 70% of the oil-based component from the green ceramic article;
- and, then
- e. firing the green ceramic article.
32. (new) The method of claim 31 wherein at least 85% of the oil-based component is removed prior to the firing.
33. (new) The method of claim 31 wherein at least 95% of the oil-based component is removed prior to the firing.